

NEBRASKA
2017

YOU WANT TO QUIT. WE WANT TO HELP.

PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACHES FOR
ENSURING QUITLINE CAPACITY

More than 245,000 adults in Nebraska were current smokers in 2015 (about 17% of the adult population)¹. This means the number of people who smoke in Nebraska would constitute the state's third largest city after Omaha and Lincoln.

In 2016, Tobacco Free Nebraska (TFN), the state's comprehensive tobacco prevention program, set a goal of increasing the number of tobacco users who called the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline. Promoting tobacco cessation is a core component of TFN's comprehensive program efforts to reduce tobacco use. Tobacco Quitlines are recognized as a best practice by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) because they have broad reach, are effective with diverse populations, and increase quit rates².

Tobacco Quitlines play an important role in increased quit attempts, yet only 19% of tobacco users plan to use the Nebraska Quitline³. Additionally, 71% of Nebraska tobacco users tried to quit without any cessation aid³.

In an effort to support our goal, TFN offered a two-week supply of over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) such as nicotine patches, gum or lozenges at no cost. This was a new endeavor for the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline, as historically it has not provided any free NRT.

This promotion occurred throughout the "quit season," which starts in mid-November for the Great American Smokeout and runs through the end of January in order to capture New Year's resolutions. As can be seen in Figure 1, the call volume to the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline increased nearly 30% when free NRT was available⁴.

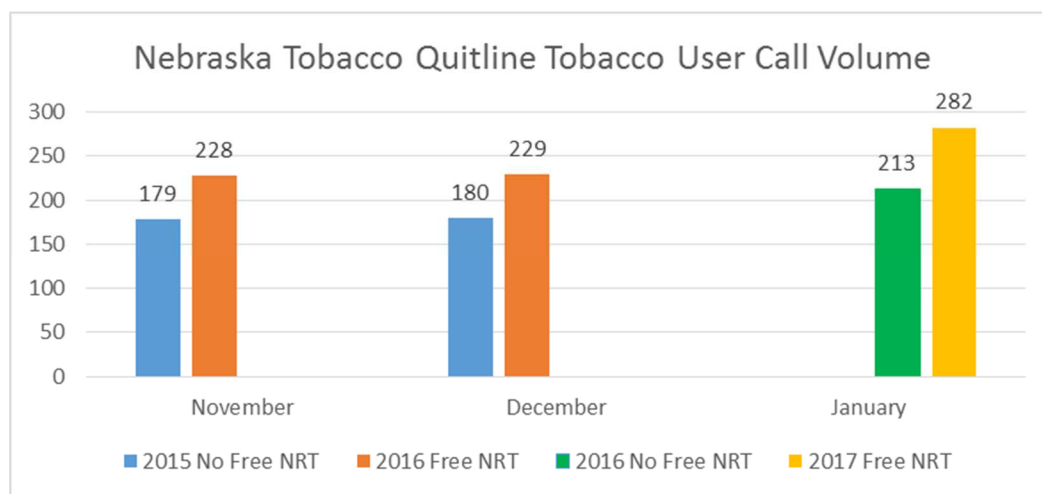


Figure 1

NEBRASKA TOBACCO QUITLINE

Due to this initial success, TFN decided to provide the no cost NRT again in March 2017 to align with the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health's (OSH) national NRT promotion. The Tips From Former Smokers™ campaign was tagged with "Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for help getting free medication. If available and eligible. That's 1-800-QUIT-NOW."

As can be seen in Figure 2, the call volume to the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline increased on the specific weeks when the tagged TIPSTM ads aired⁴.

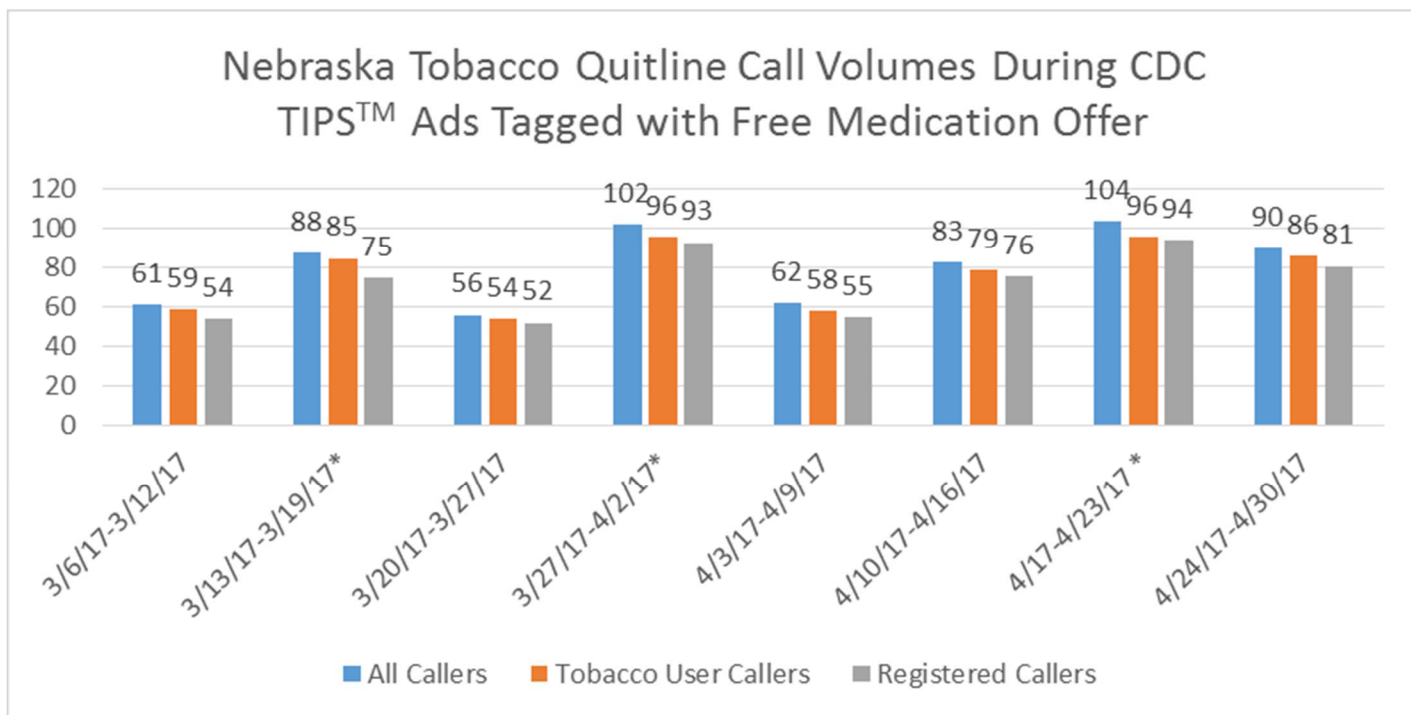


Figure 2

*Specific weeks running the tagged TIPSTM ads

The no cost NRT promotion produced positive results. Nebraska saw increased call volumes to the Quitline, including multi-calls for counseling, and 781 Nebraskans were able to receive a two-week supply of NRT⁴.

By providing this opportunity, TFN was able to reduce barriers and increase access (free NRT shipped directly to their home) to those interested in making a quit attempt regardless of their insurance coverage, if any.

Some participant feedback from the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline during the NRT promotion included:

- "This has been an easy process and I really appreciate it!"
- "You've answered a lot of questions for me. I really appreciate the program."

This new endeavor of providing NRT at no cost has helped many Nebraskans. As a result of the success of this project, TFN will seek opportunities to try to continue providing NRT and help tobacco users know they don't have to go it alone. The Nebraska Tobacco Quitline will assist and support callers through the quit process.

References:

- 1 Nebraska BRFSS, 2015
- 2 Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs, CDC, 2014
- 3 Nebraska Adult Tobacco Survey, 2015
- 4 Nebraska Tobacco Quitline Data, 2015-2017

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